

Things I Learned While Researching Today:

I've got a pretty good handle on most of my software, but I've suspected I'm not using PowerPoint as... powerfully as I could be.

- I usually present new vocabulary in **PowerPoint** slides, and provide an illustration for each word to help the kids remember. One thing that has always annoyed me is that when I import a graphic, such as a cartoon, the graphic background is stark white, while I like to give the slides a background color, so there's always this blatant rectangle around the image. <http://www.powerpointninja.com/graphics/powerpoint-color-transparency-tip/> has excellent instructions on how to set a transparent color in an image, and even on how to keep certain areas of the image from changing.
- I've done a lot of scripting in Excel, Word, and Outlook before, but it never occurred to me do anything interesting with PowerPoint. http://www.pptalchemy.co.uk/powerpoint_hints_and_tips_tutorials.html has some great examples to get me thinking—for example, they have a hangman game, randomized selector, and a slide shuffler.
- http://www.pptalchemy.co.uk/Animated_Timer2.html is a vba timer macro that I could use to replace my standalone exe timer-- it's always hard to get the active window set properly when juggling a presentation and a timer, so putting the timer *on* the presentation is a neat idea.
- I've made and/or modified some game templates for all-class quiz review, and one annoying thing in my Jeopardy template is that since the game board has a blue and gray color scheme, it's been hard to tell which questions are "used" because the "followed links" color is too similar to the font color I'm using. <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/change-the-color-of-hyperlink-text-HA010232208.aspx> shows how to change the followed link color, as well as many other things about the theme. Cool!
- Another problem I've had is that if I accidentally save a game after I've tested or played it with a class, the followed links stay "followed" and thus dimmed out even when I start the game up for another class and want it nice and fresh. <http://en.allexperts.com/q/Microsoft-PowerPoint-1035/2008/1/f/Powerpoint-Hyperlinks.htm> has code a guy wrote to iterate through and reset all the link colors, so I could just modify that to run on the save event so it's always unspoiled.